**LING 461: Experimental Semantics**

**Abstract**

**Title:** Exploring the effects of gender, age, and power dynamics on the use of irony and politeness **Students:** Diana Bakitkereyeva, Laura Seitzhappar, Madina Bayanbayeva, Gulbak Praliyeva

*Introduction.* Irony is a complex linguistic phenomenon that has been discussed in various research papers. Nevertheless, it is yet to be thoroughly investigated alongside several variables that impact its usage. In this study, we aim to analyze the influence of gender, age, and power dynamics on irony and politeness in response to situations that could evoke ironic reactions. We conducted our experiment, creating different negative scenarios and examining participants' choices among several degrees of irony and politeness.

*Methods.* To analyze the influence of such variables as gender, age, and power dynamics on the use of irony and politeness, we have conducted surveys in the English language. It contained various negative scenarios, accompanied by four response options differing in irony and politeness. Participants were asked to select the answer that best reflected their feelings about the scenario. Additionally, information about their age range and gender was collected at the beginning of the survey. Furthermore, the scenarios were also categorized based on power dynamics, where participants were put in positions as superior to inferior, inferior to superior, and equal. Such division explored potential response differences based on the perceived power dynamics.

*Results and discussion.* Using a mixed-effects model in R, we found intriguing insights into the role of gender, age, and power dynamics in the use of irony and politeness. Firstly, age emerged as a significant factor in the irony, with older people demonstrating lower levels than younger individuals. However, age does not show a significant influence on politeness. Secondly, power dynamics demonstrated an essential effect on both irony and politeness. Scenarios with the position of inferior to superior dynamic led to decreased irony usage and increased politeness. At the same time, scenarios portraying equal power dynamics showed a high level of irony usage and lower politeness. Finally, we explored that gender does not have any significant effect on either irony or politeness; however, this variable could be the result of the research limitations as there were not enough male respondents to test this prediction thoroughly.